

Human Rights Watch Urges Obama to End U.S. Spying



New York, January 17 (RHC)-- Human Rights Watch has sent a letter to U.S. President Barack Obama, urging him to rein in Washington's spying activities and respect the privacy rights of people around the world. The letter, sent to the U.S. president on Thursday, says that "the U.S. government should make clear in words and in practice its commitment to respecting the privacy rights of all people, in the U.S. and beyond."

The letter urged Obama to take measures to end the collection of telephone records of American citizens, protect the privacy rights of all people around the world, protect encryption and on-line security, and increase the transparency of Washington's spying programs.

Earlier this month, Amnesty International also sent an open letter to Obama and urged him to "put human rights at the center of U.S. policy." The concerns come as a direct result of revelations made by whistleblower Edward Snowden, showing how the NSA collects phone records of all American citizens and tracks the use of U.S.-based web servers by all people around the world.

Snowden's revelations also showed the U.S. government eavesdropped on phone calls of at least 35 world leaders, spied on Russia's leadership with the help of Sweden, spied on the 2010 G-8 and G-20 summits in Toronto as well as the 2009 G-20 summit in London with the help of the host countries' governments.

The latest revelation has shown that the NSA has been gathering almost 200 million text messages a day from around the world without a warrant, collecting data on people's contacts, travel plans, and credit card transactions.

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